THE WINNIE PARRY COLLECTOR

Summer 2025

#5

The WINNIE PARRY *Collector*

Occasional Studies in the Life and Works of Winnie Parry

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Number 5

Sarah Winifred Parry (20 May 1870 to 12 February 1953) was a Welsh writer most known for developing the modern Welsh short story. She used her nickname Winnie Parry as her pen name.

Ms. Parry became a household name with her serialized fiction at the turn of the twentieth century. Her most acclaimed work, *Sioned*, first published as a serial between 1894 and 1896, was introduced as a novel in 1906 and was reissued in 1988 and 2003. 1988 was also the year that *Sioned* was dramatized on Radio Cymru. A translation into English was published this year, after more than 120 years!

The *Winnie Parry Collector* is dedicated to the project of making her work more widely known, by means of English-language translations of her published works.

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Editorial Notes

In the editorial note to the first issue, I expressed the hope that the *Winnie Parry Collector* would branch out to include original material written about Parry, her works, and the genres in which she wrote, particularly young adult fiction, children's fiction, and literary criticism. This issue contains, indeed largely comprises, an excellent essay by Ms. B. Tranchemontagne, *A Fairytale Ecology in Victorian and Early Twentieth Century Girls' Literature*, splendidly subtitled *Fairy Tropes and Folklore Quotes in Gables, Farm and Katy, Sioned and Others Too. Wouldn't You?*

This essay places Winnie Parry's best-known work, *Sioned*, amongst its literary peers, *What Katy Did*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Pollyanna*, and *Heidi*. It also succeeds in arguing that the most popular of these, *Rebecca*, *Anne*, and *Pollyanna*, are not the mere clones they are sometimes suggested to be. I confess that I too sometimes made this error, referring to them as "the Synoptic *Cinderellas*". Ms. Tranchemontagne ably demonstrates (at least, to this editor's satisfaction) that these three, and the other works cited, embody very different places in a "fairy-tale ecology", and that their protagonists relate to very different folkloric archetypes.

Of course, we must have a contribution from the lady herself! This issue's translation is the poem *Stones of the Ford*, from Winnie Parry's *Cerrig y Rhyd*. This enigmatic meditation on time and its passage originally served as the introduction to Parry's collection of fairy tales of the same name. Readers of the *Collector* will already have sampled several of these tales and will know that they continue the eerie and unsettling atmosphere established by the poem.

J.I.W.

A Fairytale Ecology in Victorian and Early Twentieth Century Girls' Literature

or

Fairy Tropes and Folklore Quotes in Gables, Farm and Katy, Sioned and Others Too. Wouldn't You?

By Bella Tranchemontagne

Introduction: The *Plucky Heroine* Novel

The following essay examines possible fairy-tale motifs, and their subversions, in the tradition of children's literature exemplified by such works as *What Katy Did*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Anne of Green Gables, Pollyanna*, *Sioned*, and *Heidi*. These novels are distinguished by disadvantaged heroines whose moral character is already essentially formed, and admirable, but who must overcome their life circumstances to realise their considerable potential.

The majority of these fall into the "orphan girl" genre; I will use the overall term "plucky heroine novel", a little broader, since e.g. Katy, Rebecca and Sioned have surviving parents, but face essentially the same hardships and must resolve the same issues. Readers who wish to know more on the genre chosen should see the *Note on Other Works*. The

essay is intended principally to entertain, but full references are given, and speculation is clearly noted as such. The argument is that such stories entail a *fairy ecology*; a network of fairy-tale functions, motifs, assumptions, and survivals inhabiting otherwise realistic novels, and lending them folkloric depth, and archetypal resonance. This theory may shed some light on the continuing appeal of the genre, and on the examined works in particular. It may also explain, or find narrative significance in, details that might otherwise be incidental, such as Anne Shirley's red hair or Heidi's bare-footedness.

The essay considers a sample of girls' literature from England, Wales, Canada, the United States, and Switzerland. Although the folkloric traditions underlying these are different, and it may be necessary to explore this where needed, the earliest example here is from 1872, by which time the influence of Perrault and Grimm had established familiarity with a common and consistent fairy-tale vocabulary (Grimm, J. and Grimm, W., 1812; Perrault, C., 1697).

The books are not tackled in chronological order, but as the argument regarding this "fairy ecology" is best illustrated with respect to them. There is no suggestion that this sequence is anything but a convenience! Neither collusion between the authors,

nor the publication order of the books as expressing any kind of historical development is required for the argument to apply.

What Katy Did: Cinderella as the Fairies Withdraw

What Katy Did (Susan Coolidge, 1872) has the structure of a *Cinderella* story while refusing Cinderella's supernatural machinery.

The fairies of *What Katy Did* are convenient embodiments of childhood imagination, on a par with, and mentioned in connection with, Santa Claus. Katy is quite comfortable inventing stories about them, and even the youngest child must be reassured of their reality. They are relegated to the landscape of the children's favourite playground; though imaginative play goes on in school, fairies are absent.

The frequency of mentions of *fairy*, *fairies* dies away very rapidly through the book. After Katy's accident they are mentioned only once, in connection with the younger children. The only fairy tale explicitly named is that of *Red Riding Hood*, and this is not the familiar, sanitised version of the brothers Grimm, but that of *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Perrault, 1697). This is a much more brutal version, in which grandmother and Red Riding Hood are eaten and there is no rescuing woodsman.

Any rags-to-riches tale is habitually likened to Cinderella, but this is misleading. The proper structure is riches-to-rags-to-riches: Cinderella, the favoured daughter and rightful heiress, must first lose material wealth and security with the death of her father. She receives supernatural assistance, but this alone does not complete the tale. Finally, there must be "a shoe that fits". This is not merely a means of identification, but a token that the heroine is, or has become, uniquely fitted to the role that awaits her.

Here is a protagonist (Katy) whose life circumstances first change (the accident on the swing), and who must be saved by an intervention from outside her sphere (cousin Helen). Helen appears unexpectedly (on the critical occasion), arrives from "elsewhere" (somewhere Katy has never been), possesses unusual wisdom, changes the heroine's life, and then departs. Structurally she performs the role of a fairy helper while explicitly rejecting fairy-tale solutions.

Helen may be thought of as a sort of *anti-fairy godmother*. A conventional fairy godmother grants wishes, transforms pumpkins into coaches, and removes obstacles. Helen does none of these things; she neither cures Katy, nor alters the external world. There is no magic solution. Instead, she

teaches Katy how to live within her new limitations. Her "magic" is entirely inward.

Helen's influence, however, is *not* inverted from the fairy-tale norm. The fairy-story pattern transforms the heroine into something materially different, while retaining those characteristics that make her sympathetic, and this is the case with Katy. Some feminist readings have argued that Katy's accident functions as a mechanism by which a spirited and ambitious girl is reconciled to Victorian domestic expectations (see Foster & Simons, 1995, pp. 117–118). Such a reading, however, may underestimate the degree of authority Katy already exercises before the accident. As a child, Katy's duties towards authority (father, aunt, teacher) are indeed imperfectly served, but as an authority in herself- the oldest sibling, the tallest schoolgirl- she is mindful of her siblings, her friends, their well-being and their feelings. Recovering from her accident, Katy doesn't lose this authority, and the responsibility is merely formalised. For this first book, Katy has achieved a "happy ever after" (a localised one; we find out in the sequels that education and European travel are indeed in Katy's future).

Thus, rather than transforming Katy into a different person, Helen's intervention resembles the work of a fairy godmother whose enchantment

rewards and allows the realisation of qualities already present. The fairies vanish from the narrative because their function has been assumed by a form of moral rather than magical transformation.

This is not to say Katy is any *conscious* retelling or subversion of the Cinderella story. The author J.R.R. Tolkien wrote of *The Lord of the Rings* that a complex story "grows like a seed in the dark out of the leaf-mould of the mind: out of all that has been seen or thought or read, that has long ago been forgotten, descending into the deeps" (Carpenter, 1977, p.131). This should be born in mind when attributing possible influences or subtexts; the fairy-tale and folkloric reading of the author nourishes, rather than comprises, their work. Fairy tales warn their readers rather than instruct their characters; the novels discussed here are modern realist narratives in which character development is paramount. *What Katy Did* reads fluently, naturally, and engagingly; it seems to lack the self-consciousness that would be evident in a retelling, or reinterpretation, or satire of the folklore. That is so of all these examples.

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm: Changeling and Cinderella

In *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (Kate Douglas Wiggin, 1913), the people of New England seem much removed from the fairy-tale sensibility. Here "Rose Red and Snow White", characters from the Grimm fairy tale, are brands of soap. But Rebecca reads and ultimately writes fairy tales, and the adults (notably Adam Ladd, Aurelia Randall and Miss Maxwell) refer to fairy tale motifs. Rebecca contains strong elements of the Cinderella motif, but this is combined with the much earlier, folkloric concept of the *changeling*. Both motifs are mentioned explicitly.

The Cinderella motif would be apparent even if Rebbeca didn't twice mention the tale (Wiggin, 1903, p.18., p.221). There is a manifest Fairy Godmother (in the broad sense of an unsolicited benefactor); Miss Maxwell, Rebecca's teacher, is concerned with Rebecca's health and future career as well as her education. Adam Ladd remarks of her, "You are a real fairy godmother!" (Wiggin, 1903, p.256).

Ladd is superficially the stronger candidate for the role of godmother. He arrives from outside Rebecca's ordinary world, recognises her abilities, opens doors, encourages her development, and takes an

active interest in her future. That is very close to the fairy-helper role. Ladd is, however, also an intended Prince Charming, and this makes his motivation more selfish than that of Miss Maxwell. Rebecca nicknames him Aladdin before ever knowing his real name, and this is of course an archetypal Prince Charming from *the Arabian Nights* (Burton, 1885–1888). A Prince Charming is one more Cinderella trope than *Katy* can boast.

The folkloric form of the changeling legend is exemplified in Whittier (1894 pp. 251-53; also see below under "Pollyanna"). The fairies exchange a crippled or idiot child for a healthy human child. This changeling is lazy and greedy, consuming the family's food and contributing nothing to the household. Extreme measures are invoked to rid the house of the intruder, not necessarily resulting in the return of the original child.

This grim template is mitigated in the modern period, in which the child may bring blessings to a childless couple or spinster. The changeling becomes, for example, Tom Thumb, Thumbelina, Pinocchio or Snowflake, the snow-child of childless parents familiar from Andrew Lang's *Fairy Books*. Other origins are considered than fairy mischief, such as a magician's gift, or the childless adults' own craft. *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (and even more so *Anne of Green Gables*- see below) can be

interpreted as a further development of this theme, the *rehabilitation of the changeling*.

Here, Miranda and Jane Sawyer are aging sisters whose household lacks children. Rebecca arrives from "beyond" (that is, outside the Sawyer's community). She is not what was requested, this being Rebecca's older and more capable sister, Hannah. Rebecca is given an element of otherworldliness in the title of the first chapter, "We Are Seven". This is a poem by William Wordsworth, (1798), that describes a conversation with a little girl who insists that she has seven siblings, despite two of them being having died. There are seven Randall children, but one (Mira) will die in infancy.

Rebecca, unlike the folkloric changeling, transforms her new community for the better; its children with her imagination and leadership, its adults with her industry and ingenuity. She possesses an unconventional beauty, her eyes being remarkable even as a child, and bewitching both children (notably Samuel "Seesaw" Simpson) and adults (the Cobbs become veritable worshippers). After her graduation, when Rebecca briefly returns to Sunnybrook to nurse her mother Aurelia, this is made explicit: "…now, when Aurelia had time and strength to study her child, she was like some enchanting changeling. Aurelia and Hannah had gone on in the dull round and the common task,

growing duller and duller; but now, on a certain stage of life's journey, who should appear but this bewildering being, who gave wings to thoughts that had only crept before; who brought color and grace and harmony into the dun brown texture of existence." Wiggin, 1903, p.309.

It is difficult to imagine the story being any more layered had the author consciously sought to exploit the folklore/fairytale sources, "grounding" them in new England and the sensibilities of the New Englanders. This may not be the case, but certainly the impression is given that Wiggins is more conscious of the debt she owes to the fairy-tale than is Coolidge.

Anne of Green Gables: The Changeling

L.M. Mongomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) is by far the most popular work in this genre. Like *Pollyanna*, its young protagonist has herself become a folkloric, even an archetypal figure, exemplifying the plucky heroine *and* the plucky orphan. The writing is superb, consistently sparkling, and not at all dated- or perhaps it was always simply timeless.

In *Gables* there is a less firm influence from Cinderella, but the "changeling" theme has even greater evidence. In particular, this theme can be taken to account for certain stylistic choices, such as Anne's red hair, her association with liminal

environments, and her earth-colour wardrobe, that may otherwise be arbitrary. Montgomery mentions Whittier as a favourite poet in her autobiography; "I could revel at will in Longfellow, Tennyson, Whittier, Scott, Byron, Milton, Burns" (Montgomery, 1917, p.49). As mentioned above, Whittier's example of the changeling is the standard.

The Cuthberts are an ageing brother and sister whose household lacks children. Anne arrives mysteriously from "beyond" (that is, beyond the island, but also beyond the Cuthberts' family). Anne is neither who was requested, nor *what* was expected, this being a sturdy boy for the Cuthberts' farm work. This aspect further distinguishes Anne from Rebecca and from other orphans and helpers; she is summoned, but she is not the thing summoned. This is more resonant with the original folklore.

Again, Anne transforms the community she enters; the other children with her imagination and storytelling, the adults with her industry and courage. She is a more visceral and imaginative character than Rebecca, equally intelligent but less intellectual. She possesses an unconventional beauty (though it is only in the later books, notably *Anne of the Island*, in which this becomes effectively bewitching). The landscape of Prince Edward Island

is considerably more significant in *Anne* than that of New England is in *Rebecca*, and Anne delights in spaces that folklore identifies as fairy territory, such as woods, ponds, moonlit roads, orchards and once (notably) a river.

There are 22 explicit references to fairies in Anne of Green Gables, every one of which is either a literary reference or a product of Anne's imagination. Miss Montgomery would certainly have had an intimate knowledge of the folklore and literature of fairies and changelings. We could deduce this even had she not referenced the changeling legend in *Rilla of Ingleside*, given the poets she cites above.

Anne's being red-haired is a mark of distinction - there are no other redhaired characters in *Gables*. That the distinction is *red* hair may be due to the pre-Raphaelite visualisation of folkloric and fairy-tale heroines; see especially Strudwick's *Elaine* of 1891 and Sophie Anderson's of 1870. In the river episode mentioned above, Anne and her friends are re-enacting the tragic story of Elaine.

Despite imagining dresses of white, pink and pale blue, Anne is also habitually dressed in earth colours; "Marilla kept her clothed in plain, dark dresses, all made after the same unvarying pattern" (Montgomery, 1908, p.204). The first dress of which Anne herself approves is "a lovely soft brown gloria"

(ibid., op.209), and the sole departure from earth tones is not pale, but navy blue. She is especially associated with shades of green from pale to dark (and indeed, her one respite from red hair is a brief period when, due to a failed dyeing experiment, this, too, is green). As Scott, a favourite author of Montgomery, says, such earth colours are preferred of the fairies; "… the usual dress of the Fairies is green; though, on the moors, they have been sometimes observed in heath-brown, or in weeds dyed with the stoneraw, or lichen" (Scott, 1802. P.316).

Again, it is not suggested that the author sought to consciously exploit or undermine the archetypal story. Anne's fairies are well under control as an acceptable part of childhood; "Mrs. Lynde says that if I keep stretching out next year as I've done this I'll have to put on longer skirts…. And when I put on longer skirts I shall feel that I have to live up to them and be very dignified. It won't even do to believe in fairies then, I'm afraid; so I'm going to believe in them with all my whole heart this summer" (Montgomery, 1906, p.345)

It is however suggested that, consciously or unconsciously, Montgomery writes within that tradition, and that many apparently arbitrary stylistic choices, such as Anne's red hair, or her earth-colour wardrobe, can be understood in respect

of these. Miss Montgomery's "leaf-mould" is remarkably deep, varied, and fertile.

Pollyanna: The Third Child

Pollyanna, the titular heroine of Eleanor H. Porter's 1913 novel is, like Anne, an orphan, but she is no changeling, being essentially what is expected. Neither is she a Cinderella like Rebecca; materially at least she is considerably advantaged by her arrival. Aunt Polly would have had to reject her and have her sent to an orphanage for the Cinderella motif to engage. Moreover, at no time is Pollyanna visited by a fairy godmother or its analogue. Her friends and helpers are all returning Pollyanna's help. Pollyanna needs no supernatural aid, nor does she need its proxy, for she *is* that aid. Anne and Rebecca brighten their new environments and become central to these, but they don't transform their communities, healing old wounds and repairing relationships in the way that Pollyanna does.

Pollyanna's late father, the Reverend John Whittier, is named for the poet and author of *the Changeling* mentioned above. Whittier frequently incorporated folklore, Celtic mythology, and regional legends of New England and Ireland into his work, making him one of the authors who may

have formed part of the literary "leaf mould", in Tolkien's sense, from which Porter drew.

Pollyanna, youngest of her family, of whom only two are named, suggests the Third Son or Third Child, or *Askeladdin*, like the protagonists of The *Three Feathers*, *The Water of Life* or *The Queen Bee* (Grimm and Grimm, 1823). The Third Child gathers helpers due to his many kindnesses; these create obligations and relationships that function as a kind of magical capital. Grounded in Pollyanna, this is what today would be called *social capital*. The Third Child succeeds because (s)he invests in others without expecting immediate reward, and the network of grateful helpers ultimately overcomes challenges that no individual could manage alone. Helpers in such stories are typically animals and outcasts, so it is significant that Pendleton's dog alerts Pollyanna to its owner's injury, and that Jimmy is himself homeless. Here the challenge of Pollyanna is her incapacitation due to an accident.

The Glad Game is a superior means to embody, express and realise this kindness. It is not a mere vehicle for optimism, certainly not in the "naive and unwarranted" sense now attributed to a "Pollyanna". Eleanor H. Porter was no *ingénue*. Her first publication was *Cross Currents* (1907), an exposé of child labour. The Game is a superb coping strategy; superb but not perfect, and Pollyanna

knows this before the accident; "'It must be that there are some things that 'tisn't right to play the game on- and I'm sure funerals is one of them. There's nothing in a funeral to be glad about.'" (Porter 1913, p.139). The Glad Game is therefore neither escapism nor invulnerability. It enables Pollyanna to endure hardship, but it cannot abolish hardship. When the accident comes, the Glad Game is not enough- but what the Glad Game has achieved, the network of affection and gratitude Pollyanna has patiently built, is called upon to sustain her in return. The Game prepares her for suffering; it does not exempt her from it.

Sioned: The Trickster

Sioned (1906), by Winnie Parry, takes place in a practical and religious community, comprised of the farmers and chapel-goers of North Wales. But there is an undercurrent of superstition, one that the mischievous Sioned (Janet) Hughes exploits to play her pranks, notably driving out Dick the Farmhand with a fake ghost. Not all of this mischief is intentional; indeed, it is when Sioned is attempting to do good that she causes most trouble- it is simply in her nature to be in the eye of the storm. Sioned, then, invokes the "Trickster" or mischief maker, Puck, the Will o' the Wisp.

But, the Trickster is a static archetype, delighting in disruption rather than growth. Because Sioned is the heroine of a *Bildungsroman* rather than a folktale, she cannot permanently occupy that role. She therefore grows beyond it, while the narrative redistributes the trickster function among other characters.

The first of these is Sioned's friend and prospective sister-in-law, Elin Jones (Little-Elin-from-the-Hill). Elin is a diminutive and clever farm girl, but as Sioned says, she can't look at her without thinking of *y Tylwyth Teg* (the *Fair Family*, the Welsh name for the fairies). It is Elin who plays a classic fairytale trick on the obnoxious cousin Harold, misleading him into an exhausting march over the countryside.

The trickster *par excellence*, however, is Cousin Pegi. It is Pegi who suggests the "ghost" trick to Sioned. She first appears in the story driving a "chariot", a tandem buggy, accompanied by leaping dogs, inviting comparison with both Arawn and Rhiannon of *the Mabinogion*. Her home at Bryncelli is an old manor-house likened by Sioned to a knightly court, and Sioned is brought there, one Christmas, in what is portrayed as a kidnapping. Bryncelli is an "otherworld" in the tradition of the Welsh *Annwn*, and may owe its name to a burial mound called *Bryn Celli Ddu* in Anglesey.

Sioned starts out a clever and observant girl, but ignorant and mischievous, with a blind spot for how well people think of her. She relies on her brother Bob, Elin's betrothed, to be her conscience. By the end of the book she has spent time in London, has helped run the farm and dairy while her mother takes care of the newly-crippled Bob, rescued Will the Farmhand from death in the snow, kept the secret that Tom Ty Mawr died pining for Maggie Tanrallt, deliberately acquired some book-learning, and impressed the lawyer John Jones (Elin's brother) with her grasp of the books they read together.

Even after all this growth, Sioned's instinct remains to achieve what she wants, or at least what she wants for others, with (well-meaning) trickery. Therefore she manipulates Elin and Bob back together when Bob's accident threatens to come between them. But Sioned cannot be allowed to *remain* the trickster- she must become unequivocally an accomplished *person*. It is therefore up to Elin to turn the tables, and reunite Sioned with John.

The novel is equally revealing in the fairy-tale roles that Sioned does *not* inhabit. Sioned has her "fairy godmother", but since Sioned is not an instance of the Cinderella motif, the intervention of "Auntie London" proves singularly unsuccessful. It is thanks

to her well-meaning aunt that Sioned is taken to London to attend finishing school. But Sioned, the Welsh-speaking country girl, is isolated and unhappy in the crowded, noisy, anglophone capital. Inevitably, the mischief maker innocently brings trouble (and the police) to her aunt's door, and the intentions of the fairy godmother are thwarted.

Nor does Sioned occupy the niche of the "Third Child" exemplified by Pollyanna. Although she ultimately earns the affection and respect of her community, this arises not from a growing network of lucky interventions but from perseverance, loyalty and good humour. For instance, her hospitality to Jacob Jones gets her not a Prince Charming, but an unwanted suitor, who nearly ends her relationship with John.

Sioned's progress is therefore achieved neither by magical intervention nor by accumulated good fortune. It depends instead upon judgment slowly acquired through experience. The fairy-tale functions remain present in the surrounding community, but Sioned herself gradually relinquishes them in order to become something rarer: not an archetype, but a mature woman.

Heidi: the Genius Loci?

The protagonist of *Heidi* (1884), by Johanna Spyri, is an orphan; she arrives from beyond; and she

positively impacts her environment. Heidi, like Pollyanna, is a child whose arrival is itself the beneficent intervention. She unequivocally redeems her grandfather and heals Clara. In the intial draft of this essay, thereofore, Heidi was essentially a footnote to the above. However, it is possible that Heidi's nature belongs to a deeper stratum of the archetypal than the fairy story, and I wish briefly to touch on that.

Having arrived at the Alps, Heidi takes off her shoes, stockings, and most of her clothes, and runs off to frolic barefoot with the goats. This is partly symbolic of Heidi's simple liberation from the constraints of the town, as suggested by Nikolajeva (2000), but the evocative language impresses the reader that something deeper is intended. When, a little later, Heidi, *not* the much more experienced native Peter, dramatically saves a goat, it is confirmed that Heidi has not just come to a new home; she has found her proper element.

In Hamburg, Heidi experiences what English translations render simply as "homesickness". The German original uses *Heimweh*; this was a mental illness suffered by Swiss soldiers forced to serve abroad away from the Alpine terrain. Described in 1688 by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer, *heimweh* caused physical deterioration, high fevers, and even death. For Heidi, separation from the

Alpine environment entails more than loss of a home; she is taken from her proper air, removed into a vacuum.

These themes are not unique to Heidi. Anne Shirley was not born on Prince Edward Island, but she makes it her own (though only in the third novel does she express her being "all island" explicitely). When Janet Hughes (Sioned) must attend school in London, she pines for her Welsh family, farm, and language (the Welsh experience of *hiraeth*, "longing", which is the name of the London chapter). But in Heidi the sense of belonging, and the experience of seperation from this, is more intense, more visceral.

I tentatively suggest that Heidi invites comparison with the *Landvættir*, a germanic *genius loci*. Her bare-footedness, the lack of a barrier between the little girl and the earth, is therefore symbolic of the continuity between Heidi and her environment. If so, then in *Heidi* is evinced a branch of fairy ecology that is ecological in the *literal* sense: not centred on fairy helpers at all, but on the relationship between a morally formed child and a living landscape. I advance this not as a conclusion, but as an analogy, and a possible folkloric resonance that may contribute to the archetypal depth of the book.

Other Novels

The genre decided upon, "plucky heroine", is a subset of the *Bildungsroman* (German: "education novel"), novels dealing with a person's formative years, education and maturation. In particular, that subset concerned with girls and young women under the restrictions and lack of opportunities typical of Victorian and Edwardian times. The protagonist arrives with a positive, if immature moral character, which is tested by either difficulty which is overcome (Katy, Pollyanna, Sioned, Heidi) and/or aspiration to a moral example in a person or community (Anne, Rebecca, Sioned), which is realised. This excludes novels such as *Sophie's Troubles* (Ségur, 1858), in which the protagonist must undergo a moral transformation; Sophie begins as a violent and heedless person, and must improve by example after a profound loss of family and security. Still more does it exclude any typical *Backfischroman* (German, referring to *Backfisch*, "small fry, teenage girl") such as *An Obstinate Maid* (von Rhoden, 1885). These follow middle-to-upper-class heroines and necessarily conclude with an entirely conventional marriage, whatever the aspirations of the younger girl.

Where is Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* in this essay? U. C. Knoepflmacher, in his foreword to the 2002 Penguin Edition, argues that

while Burnett avoided writing overt fantasy, she consciously used realistic narrative elements as real-world mirrors of the Cinderella myth to unpack themes of female resilience, class, and trauma. It is notable that the play she expanded to create the novel was titled *A Little Un-fairy Princess*. Burnett, therefore, is much more likely to have consciously *retold* Cinderella, in which case the appearance of the fairy ecology is unsurprising, and much less informative.

There are several influential ensemble novels that belong to the present genre, especially *Little Women* (1868–69) by Louisa May Alcott and *The Railway Children* (1906) by E. Nesbit. Fairy tales, however, are characterised by relatively small casts whose members fulfil distinct and readily recognisable archetypal functions. Ensemble novels distribute both narrative attention and character development over several protagonists, so that fairy-tale functions are often shared, exchanged, or combined. A single character may occupy different "ecological niches" at different stages of the narrative, while several characters together may fulfil what, in a fairy tale, would be the role of a single archetype.

Secondary figures are often more readily identified. Thus Mr. Laurence in *Little Women* and the "Old Gentleman" in *The Railway Children* may reasonably be regarded as fairy-godparent figures.

The principal characters, however, resist such straightforward classification. For this reason, ensemble novels have been excluded from the main discussion.

Conclusion: An Ecology of Fairy-Tale Functions

The "plucky heroine" novels comprise a kind of *fairy ecology*, one less about supernatural beings than about narrative niches. In the works considered here, the reader finds the time-honoured fairy-tale roles of Cinderella, the Fairy Godparent, Prince Charming, the Wicked Stepmother, the Changeling, the Third (or Favoured) Child, the Trickster and, more tentatively, the *Landvættir*. The supernatural occupants have disappeared, but the ecological niches remain, filled by schoolteachers, cousins, aunts, neighbours, benefactors, and ordinary young women. Realistic girls' novels inherit the functional architecture of fairy tales while translating it into ordinary social life.

What do the novels gain from this? One possibility is *archetypal resonance*. These niches are occupied by characters that are easily recognised, that evoke expectations and strong emotions. Suppose any of these novels had ended in tragedy. Such endings would not merely disappoint readers; they would violate the archetypal expectations established by

the narrative. The power of Matthew Cuthbert's death in *Anne of Green Gables* or the estrangement of Sioned and John in *Sioned* lies precisely in their delaying, but not ultimately denying, the expected fulfilment.

The fairy-tale substratum may also provide an underlying narrative framework. Several of these novels, notably *Anne*, *Rebecca* and *Sioned*, are episodic in construction. Their unity derives less from a tightly plotted sequence of events than from the heroine's gradual movement through, modification of, or departure from the fairy-tale roles that shape the narrative.

A third possibility is *narrative distinctiveness*. An ecology in which every niche was occupied in precisely the same way would be a poor ecology indeed. Likewise, if every plucky heroine novel explored the same fairy-tale functions, the genre would quickly become repetitive. Instead, each work derives much of its individuality from the particular archetypes it comes to develop or transform. Anne, Rebecca, and Pollyanna are all spirited orphan girls arriving in unfamiliar communities, yet they are distinguished precisely because they occupy different ecological niches: Anne the Changeling, Rebecca the Cinderella, and Pollyanna the Third (or Favoured) Child. Their similarities establish the

genre; their differing archetypal inheritances give each novel its distinctive voice.

When an ecological niche is vacated, other species migrate, adapt, or evolve to occupy it. So too with fairy tales. They did not disappear from the Victorian/Edwardian girls' novel; they naturalised. Fairies, princes, witches and enchanted helpers gave way to teachers, cousins, neighbours, benefactors and landscapes, yet their narrative functions endured, evolving to inhabit an altered literary ecosystem.

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Stones of the Ford

A translation of *Cerrig y Rhyd*, by Winnie Parry.

THE cold clear waters dance between
The grey stones of the ford,
That many tread, from dawn till night,
And high safe way accord;
The children step so lightly here,
With Spring in every face,
The old one steps but slow, with care,
The grave's brink where they pace.
And some with dancing hearts go by,
As dancing waters go,
And some there are with heavy hearts,
Their life a tale of woe.
Stones of the ford,
Old stones of the ford,
We all will remember the stones of the ford.

The waters whisper 'neath the stars,
And rare they are and few
That step now on the cold grey stones,
Who cross the ford anew.
And some come with their hands entwined,
Each, to the other, all,
And love will last, they tell themselves
While yet the waters fall;
And some there are made weary by

The anguish of the day,
That in the water's bosom feel
The burden wash away.
Stones of the ford,
Old stones of the ford,
Oh, how we love the old stones of the ford.

Far from the water's gentle sound,
Under a cold, strange sky,
Shadows of heartsick longing loom
All gleeful, shrouded, sly;
And oh, to see the place again
Where once we felt the charm
That breathed upon the grieving soul,
A gentle soothing balm;
To meet all those we met before
Where those bright waters swirled,
With friends long gone, and there are none
Like them in all the world.
Stones of the ford,
Old stones of the ford,
We long and we mourn for the stones of the ford.

Translated by J. I. Wyburn